

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Upon entry of this amendment, the following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the pending application.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A furcated bone screw, comprising:
 - a shaft having a first end and a second end;
 - a screw thread extending from the second end and circumnavigating the shaft; and
 - a plurality of elongate slots longitudinally formed in the shaft from the second end and creating a plurality of furcated branches;wherein the plurality of branches ~~are plastically deformed~~ bend radially outwardly from a first screw diameter to a relatively larger second circumferential diameter and are compressible to the first screw diameter without plastic deformation.
2. (Previously Presented) The furcated bone screw of claim 1, wherein the plurality of furcated branches can compress to the first screw diameter state when furcated bone screw is initially positioned at an opening of a hole.
3. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 1, wherein the plurality of furcated branches return to the second circumferential diameter upon reduction of a radially compressive force.
4. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 1, wherein the plurality of furcated branches extend for a distance of at least half of the length of the shaft.
5. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 1, wherein the screw thread extends from the second end of the shaft at least substantially to the first end of the shaft.
6. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 1, further comprising a screw head disposed at the first end of the shaft.
7. (Previously Presented) The furcated bone screw of claim 1, further comprising a driver bore disposed at the first end of the shaft.

8. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 1, wherein the plurality of furcated branches comprises three branches.
9. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 1, wherein the plurality of furcated branches have sufficient flexibility such that the plurality of branches are compressible by a user.
10. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 1, wherein the furcated bone screw is formed at least partially by titanium.
11. (Currently Amended) A furcated bone screw, comprising:
a shaft having a first end and a second end;
a screw thread extending from the second end and circumnavigating the shaft; and
a plurality of elongate slots longitudinally formed in the shaft from the second end and creating a furcated means;
wherein the furcated means extend radially outwardly and are compressible.
12. (Previously Presented) The furcated bone screw of claim 11, wherein the furcated means can compress from a circumferential diameter when extended radially outwardly to a smaller circumferential screw diameter when the furcated bone screw is initially positioned at an opening of a hole.
13. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 11, wherein the furcated means can return to a radially expanded state upon reduction of a radially compressive force acting on the furcated means.
14. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 11, wherein the furcated means are formed along at least half of the length of the shaft.
15. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 11, wherein the screw thread extends from the second end of the shaft at least substantially to the first end of the shaft.

16. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 11, further comprising a screw head disposed at the first end of the shaft.

17. (Previously Presented) The furcated bone screw of claim 11, further comprising a driver bore disposed at the first end of the shaft.

18. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 11, wherein the furcated means comprises a plurality of furcated branches.

19. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 11, wherein the furcated means have flexibility such that the furcated means are compressible by a user.

20. (Original) The furcated bone screw of claim 11, wherein the furcated bone screw is formed at least partially by titanium.